

Social and Cultural Anthropology in Postsocialist Europe Three Decades Later: A Lost War for Social and Cultural Anthropology in Postsocialism?

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Abstract: This paper is intended as an analysis of the post-socialist war over social and cultural anthropology. It presents the four most important groups which participated in this war: the group of the “Volkskunde” people; the group of the “Völkerkunde” people; the group of native anthropologists; and the group of the western-educated socio-cultural anthropologists. It isolates the most important logic of this war, i.e., the logic of ‘money and power’, as well as other important, ultimately decisive factors in the outcome of the post-socialist changes and development in the field of social and cultural anthropology, such as the role of social capital and the role of (political) chameleonism. Additionally, some of basic results of the post-socialist war over social and cultural anthropology – redefining ethnology and social and cultural anthropology, the invention of anthropo-ethnology and de-professionalization – are all presented and analysed.

Keywords: social and cultural anthropology, postsocialist countries, anthropologization of ethnology, anthropo-ethnology, de-professionalization, history of anthropology, social capital, political chameleonism

1. Introduction

The aim of my article *is to present some general trends* which have become part of social and cultural anthropology in East and Central European postsocialist countries over the last thirty years. This aim brings with it several limitations.

The first limitation is geographical; postsocialist Russia, as well as other post-Soviet, postsocialist countries, does not form part of my analysis. There are several reasons for this decision; first, under socialism, the USSR developed its own tradition of ethnography, ethnology, and anthropology; second, part of this tradition was a tendency to equalize anthropology with ethnology and ethnography; third, in the USSR, anthropology formed part of the historical sciences; fourth, in the USSR, ethnology and anthropology participated not only in the 'nation-building' project, but also in the 'empire-building' project. These are the most important reasons that socialist and postsocialist anthropology in socialist and postsocialist Russia and other post-soviet states constitutes a special case that should be analyzed separately.

The second limitation relates to the fact that my text *is not* intended to present and analyse the changes, processes and developments in any of the East and Central European postsocialist countries in detail. There are several reasons for this decision, too. The first is that such an analysis would exceed the space limitation for an article in *Cargo*. The second concerns the fact that detailed analyses of specific European postsocialist countries have already been done by several other authors (see Barrera-González, Heintz, and Horolets 2017; Bošković 2008a; Bošković and Hann 2013; Giordano, Ruegg, and Boscoboinik 2014; Hann, Sárkány, and Skalník 2005; Kockel, Craith, and Frykman 2012; Köstlin, Niedermüller, and Nikitsch 2002; Kürti and Skalník 2009; Mihăilescu, Iliev, and Naumović 2008c; Mühlfried, and Sokolovskiy 2011; Skalník 2000, 2002, 2005; Slavec Gradišnik 2000)¹. I have used their analyses and their data as basic materials for my text. This was not, however, the only means of data collection. Several items of my data are a result of direct observation with participation (I have been part of socialist and postsocialist social and cultural anthropology since 1981), and I collected much important additional data through conversations with many socialist and postsocialist anthropologists. However, those who specialize in postsocialist social and cultural anthropology in a specific European postsocialist country would inevitably find many deficiencies in my text when that particular European post-socialist country is in question (concrete contexts are missing, several factual situations are omitted etc.). This is normal. The change, development, dilemmas and problems associated with social and cultural anthropology in every East and Central European postsocialist country would need a book to describe.

¹ This list of references will appear many times in the text. To save space, I quote it in the text as BR (=basic references).

2. Four Groups Which Played the Game

When Godina analysed the situation of social and cultural anthropology in European postsocialist countries in 2002, she stressed among others that for postsocialist countries so-called ‘money and power dilemma’ was characteristic (ibid: 19). This dilemma means that in the process of the institutionalisation of social and cultural anthropology in European postsocialist countries the main interest was not to establish professional departments and institutes of social and cultural anthropology, but to gain control over a new discipline, the introduction of which was connected with new jobs, new money and new professional positions (see also Ciubrinskas 2017: 181-82; Kiliánova 2012: 116; Kürti 1996: 15).

In accordance with the data I possess, what really happened in the years since the fall of socialism was a fight for money and power between four groups of scientists: 1. ‘*Volkskunde leute*’ (i.e., ‘Volkskunde people’); 2. ‘*Völkerkunde leute*’ (i.e., ‘Völkerkunde people’); 3. native social and/or cultural anthropologists; and 4. socio-cultural anthropologists, educated in the West.²

2.1. Group No. 1: *Volkskunde* People/Ethnologists

In most European postsocialist countries the important group was the one of ‘*Volkskunde leute*’, which must be distinguished from ‘*Völkerkunde leute*’.

In the German-speaking area, Central Europe and Scandinavia, there is a standardized difference between *Völkerkunde* and *Volkskunde*. As Barnard and Spencer (2008: 627) point out, “*Völkerkunde* is German for ‘folks-study’... The term is synonymous with ethnology (German *Ethnologie*) or cultural anthropology, but sharply distinguished from *Volkskunde*, ‘own folk-study’.” (see also Bennett 1999; Dostal and Gingrich 2008; Hann 2007; Hofer 1968). According to this distinction in Central Europe, the German-speaking area and Scandinavia, there was *Völkerkunde*, which was equalized with social and especially cultural anthropology.

However, in most European socialist countries, it was *Volkskunde*, which was identified with ethnology.³ This was a result of very specific national developments in the fields of *Volkskunde* and *Völkerkunde* (see BR). Even though we

² In Sárkány’s opinion (2002: 560), there were also some other groups which advocated for the introduction of social and cultural anthropology in postsocialist countries. However, in accordance with the data I possess, these groups did not play an important role in the postsocialist war over social and cultural anthropology.

³ Here the equation of German-speaking countries and Scandinavian countries with European socialist and postsocialist countries is wrong. This mistake is frequently present (see Barnard and Spencer 2008: 627; Dostal and Gingrich 2008: 263–65; Ingold 2007: xiv).

cannot describe and analyse these developments, we need to stress some general characteristics which are connected with the fact that it was *Volkskunde* and not *Völkerkunde* that in postsocialism became equated with ethnology.

What existed in socialism in European socialist countries was *Volkskunde*, the field which was the study of the folk customs of the researcher's own country, not a study and research of foreign, especially non-European folks (see BR).⁴ Such an orientation had several reasons. We will mention only two of them: the first is ideological; and the second is political.

When ideological reasons are in question, it was of fundamental importance that in most European socialist countries *Volkskunde* was understood as a branch which studied a concrete ethnic history in accordance with the Marxist understanding of history (see BR.). Opinions vary on how strong and important the effect of Marxism was on socialist ethnography and ethnology. In Sárkány's opinion, Marxism in socialist ethnology had never been extensively applied (Sárkány 2002: 563). On the other hand, Kodra-Hysa (2013) reports that for the Albanian case there was about almost absolute determination of Albanian ethnography with Marxism.

The second reason which promoted the existence of *Volkskunde* was political, connected with the affirmation and sometimes also with establishment of independent nations and national socialist states (Sárkány 2002: 562). *Volkskunde* in socialist countries was a nation-building science (Stocking 1982).⁵ Mihăilescu, Iliev, and Naumović (2008b: 13-14) stressed this characteristic as one of the basic differences between ethnology and social and cultural anthropology: ethnology is 'nation-building', western social and cultural anthropology is 'empire-building'.⁶ Studying nations, their origins and folk customs was a special form of formal recognition of a concrete nation. On the other hand, such study of nations was also a form of political legitimisation of the socialist states as democratic political and historical units. That was also the reason why socialist states not only allowed, but also stimulated 'folk-study', as long as this study

⁴ Native terms for *Volkskunde* are: "národopis", "narodopisje", "ludoznawstwo", "narodouka", "néprajz" etc. – all these terms mean "a description of people" or "knowledge about people". The people which were described and/or analysed were in principle the ethnologist's own ethnic/national group or related ethnic groups (such as Slavs, Ugrofinns etc.).

⁵ This nation-building function of ethnology was present already before socialism (see Cvetković 2008: 285–88; Eretescu 2008: 41–44; Hedeşan 2008: 21–24; Iliev 2008: 148–51; Mihăilescu 2008: 78; Mihăilescu, Iliev, and Naumović 2008b: 3–13; Mihăilescu, Iliev, and Naumović 2008c: 433, 437, 440–42; Naumović 2008: 214–18).

⁶ The idea of 'national-building' ethnology was criticized by several postsocialist ethnologists and anthropologists (see Buchowski 2012; Čapo-Žmegač 2014; Kiliánová 2012).

was oriented to the history and customs of nations officially recognized by concrete socialist state.⁷

The original form of ‘folk-study’ in all European socialist countries received a form of folklorist study, which was also described as ‘ethnography’ (see BR). Gradually in some European socialist countries a new form of ‘folk-study’ developed, which was more sociologically and anthropologically oriented. In many cases, for this new type of ‘folk-study’ the term ‘ethnology’ was introduced to distinguish it from traditional folkloristics/ethnography.

In some European socialist countries traditional folkloristics/ethnography and ethnology became two separate disciplines. As Kremenšek (in Kremenšek and Halpern 1995: 55), one of the most prominent Slovene ethnologists (see Slavec Gradišnik 2000, 2013), described in 1995, “Folkloristics and ethnology are two essentially different things in Slovenia today.”

To conclude: in the second half of the 20th century, there were at least two different ethnologies in Europe: the first one was ethnology in German-speaking countries and in Scandinavia, where it was a synonym for *Völkerkunde* and social and cultural anthropology; and the second was ethnology in European socialist countries, where it was a synonym for *Volkskunde*. There were several important differences between these two ethnologies (see Balikci 2008: 180, 182–3; Benovska–Sabkova 2008: 120–24, 128; Bitušiková 2002: 141; Garnizov 2008: 168–72; Gorunović 2008: 311–12; Hann 2007, 2008: 400–1; Hedeşan 2008: 21–38; Hofer 1968; Južnič 1987: 33; Kandert 2002: 43; Kasabova 2008: 190–91; Kodra–Hysa 2013, 2014; Kremenšek and Halpern 1995; Melikishvili 2002: 67; Mihăilescu 2008: 72, 74; Mucha 2002: 87; Naumović 2008: 216, 230–31, 251; Prelić 2008: 279; Prošić–Dvornić 2008: 364, 368–69, 372, 376; Sárkány 2002; Slavec Gradišnik 2000; Sokolovski 2002; Spasić 2008: 343): first, the research and study in ethnology/*Völkerkunde* were oriented towards non-European societies and cultures, and in ethnology/*Volkskunde*, study and research were oriented towards the researcher’s own folk group; second, for ethnology/*Volkskunde*, the tradition of ethnographic, folkloric, and ethnological methods of fieldwork was characteristic, ethnology/*Völkerkunde* practiced mostly anthropological observation with participation; the third important difference lies in the fact that ethnology/*Völkerkunde* was

⁷ For more about the complex relation between socialist ethnology and nationalism see: Balikci 2008: 180; Benovska–Sabkova 2008: 120; Buchowski 2012; Cvetković 2008: 300; Čapo–Žmegač 2014; Eretescu 2008: 51; Garnizov 2008: 162; Gorunović 2008: 328; Hann 2008: 402, 404; Iliev 2008: 148, 151; Mihăilescu 2008: 57, 61; Mihăilescu, Iliev, and Naumović 2008a: 425, 428; Mihăilescu, Iliev, and Naumović 2008b: 1–10, 12–18; Mihăilescu, Iliev, and Naumović 2008c: 438, 445; Naumović 2008: 214, 218–9, 225, 242–3, 250; Prelić 2008: 262–4; Prošić–Dvornić 2008: 354, 359.

essentially a comparative discipline, ethnology/*Volkskunde* remained a discipline characterised by “positivistic descriptions” (Kandert 2002: 43); the fourth difference concerns the type of knowledge: ethnology/*Volkskunde* was the development of ‘self-knowledge’ (Kremenšek in Kremenšek and Halpern 1995: 54), while ethnology/*Völkerkunde* developed knowledge about ‘Others’; for the majority of ethnology/*Volkskunde*, Marxist theory was characteristic; in ethnology/*Völkerkunde*, a broad range of theoretical frames was used.⁸

The above mentioned two ethnologies had different statuses in European socialist countries. *Volkskunde*/ethnology had been formally recognized as an academic discipline (see BR).⁹ On the other hand, separate and independent departments and research institutes for ethnology/*Völkerkunde*/cultural anthropology were in principle absent. Departments named as ‘Department of Ethnology’ were in fact departments of ethnology/*Volkskunde* and not departments of ethnology/*Völkerkunde*/cultural anthropology.

On the other hand, ‘folk-study’ in all European socialist countries has a long and well-recognized tradition (see BR; Čapo-Žmegač 1993, 2014; Geană 1990, 1997, 1999, 2002; Kotnik 1986; Kremenšek 1978, 1983, 1985, 1991, 1995; Kremenšek and Halpern 1995). For *Völkerkunde*/ethnology/cultural anthropology in most European socialist countries any important tradition is not characteristic (see BR).

And, as already mentioned, *Volkskunde*/ethnology was understood as an acceptable discipline and science, while ethnology/*Völkerkunde*/cultural anthropology was understood as a “bourgeois pseudo-science” (Melikishvili 2002: 67). As such it was marginalized (see Godina 2002).

To conclude: the first group which participated in East and Central European postsocialist countries in the war over social and cultural anthropology was a group of ex-socialist ethnologists, i.e., the group consisting of ex-socialist *Volkskunde* people. This group was the equipped, with well-established social network and political connections and support, with the best institutional back-up

⁸ In European socialist countries, some ethnologists and social and cultural anthropologists denied these differences (see Brumen 2001, 2002; Buchowski 2004, 2005, 2012; Čapo-Žmegač 1993, 2014; Čapo and Gulin Zrnić 2014, 2017; Frykman 2012; Jezernik 1991, 1993; Jezernik and Muršič 2000; Muršič 2002, 2008; Prica 1995, 2006, 2007; Šmitek 1991, 1996; Šmitek and Jezernik 1992, 1995). However, they present exceptions among ethnologists and social and cultural anthropologists in postsocialist countries (see BR).

⁹ In different European socialist countries, there were important differences in the field of the institutionalisation of ethnology/*Volkskunde*; for example, in Bulgaria “in the universities, the position of ethnography and folklore studies was weak.” (Elchinova 2002: 26) On the other hand, in Slovenia there was a separate Department of Ethnology at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana.

and with the longest historical tradition. In some European socialist countries, ethnologists were seen “as belonging to the intellectual elite of their nation” (Mihăilescu, Iliev, and Naumović 2008b: 14).

2.2. Group No. 2: *Völkerkunde* People

In some European socialist countries, there were also specialists for non-European cultures and societies (see Bošković 2008b; Bošković and Hann 2013; Godina 2002; Hann, Sárkány, and Skalník 2005; Mihăilescu, Iliev, and Naumović 2008c; Slavec Gradišnik 2000; Sárkány 2002).

The largest group for the study of the folk customs of ethnic groups, which were not the researcher’s own groups, was established in the Soviet Union because the Soviet Union as a multicultural state incorporated a large number of very different non-Russian ethnic groups (Sokolovski 2002). In other European socialist countries “their number was small” (Sárkány 2002: 560). In Bulgaria, no such group existed (Benovska-Sabkova 2008: 118).

The specialists for ethnic groups, which were not the same as the researcher’s ethnic group, in principle did not have their own research institutes and university departments (see BR). This area of study and research was not recognized as a separate discipline; in principle, it was understood as the ‘ethnology of non-European countries’, i.e., as a study of non-European cultures and societies in folkloristic/*Volkskunde* tradition. It was the reason why some of the specialists for non-native ethnic groups worked in institutes of ethnology/*Volkskunde* (see BR).¹⁰

This coexistence of *Völkerkunde* and *Volkskunde* types of ethnology produces several important consequences. One is that in ex-socialist ethnographies/ethnologies the perception that *Völkerkunde* and *Volkskunde* types of ethnology are two divided disciplines was not very common (in contrast to the German tradition). The second is the feature “that there has never been an absolute dichotomy between domestic investigations and research on distant territories” (Sárkány 2002: 562). And third: “The existence of ties between domestic ethnography and non-European studies ... helped incorporate some anthropological ideas in Central and Eastern European ethno-sciences” (ibid.: 563) which led to the process of the anthropologisation of ethnology.

All these characteristics have important consequences also in the postsocialist developments of ethnology and social and cultural anthropology.

¹⁰ In Slovenia Zmago Šmitek was a professor for non-European ethnology at the Department of Ethnology, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. He was the only professor for this field (see Slavec Gradišnik 2000).

Because of the coexistence of the ethnology of non-European societies with *Volkskunde* for ethnologists, who were specialists in non-European societies, not only the absence of separate and specialized research institutes and university department was characteristic, but also a lack of an elaborate social network and political connections (if those existed, they were individual not group connections and networks; if there were group connections, these connections were shared by *Volkskunde* ethnologists). They were not strong and important; they were few in number, as a group – if the group existed at all – small, with little social capital. For them also a lack of a separated recognized historical tradition was characteristic.

2.3. Group No. 3: Native Social and Cultural Anthropologists

The third group, which participated in the struggle over social and cultural anthropology in European postsocialist countries, was a group, consisting of native social and cultural anthropologists, which in European socialist countries practiced anthropology already in the socialist period (see BR).

Many native socialist anthropological traditions are connected with physical anthropology, which in most European socialist countries was recognized as a separate research and study discipline (see Benovska-Sabkova 2008; Godina 2002; Martinovič Klarič 2013; Mihăilescu, Iliev, and Naumovič 2008a). There were separate and well-recognized institutes for physical anthropology, as well as separate departments at universities to study physical anthropology (*ibid.*). Because most of the physical anthropologists were natural scientists, there were not understood by the socialist state as ideologically dangerous. These were reasons why the position of physical anthropology in most European socialist states was stable, and in some cases even privileged. As a group, they had (good) institutional support. They also shared several other characteristics with ethnology/*Volkskunde*: this group was in principle the biggest group of native anthropologists in European socialist countries, with an elaborated social network and in some cases also with political connections and support, with long (if not the longest) anthropological historical tradition and with a recognized public position and respect.

Quite the opposite was true for the situation of native social and cultural anthropology.

Despite social and cultural anthropology formally not existing in European socialist countries (see Elchinova 2002: 25; Godina 2002; Kandert 2002: 43; Mihăilescu, Iliev and Naumovič 2008a: 425), at least in some European socialist countries, there were small groups – in some cases only isolated individuals – who practiced a kind of social and cultural anthropology of the western type (see BR). In several European socialist countries something like native social and

cultural anthropological traditions can be recognized, for example in Romania (see Eretescu 2008; Geană 1990, 1997, 1999, 2002; Hedeşan 2008; Mihăilescu 2008; Sárkány 2002), in Serbia with Zagorka Pešić Golubović (see Bošković 2008a: 161–2; Gorunović 2008: 320; Mihăilescu, Ilia, and Naumović 2008a: 431, 2008c: 443–4; Naumović 2008: 232, 238–9, 249, 254; Pešić 1994; 2005; Spasić 2008), in Croatia with Rudi Supek, Dunja Rihtman Auguštin and Eva Erlich (see Bošković 2008b; Čapo–Žmegač 1993, 2014; Godina 2002: 6; Rihtman Auguštin 1998, 2001, 2004) and in Slovenia with Stane Južnič (see Bošković 2008a: 161; Godina 2013; Minnich 2013: 349–50; Slavec Gradišnik 2000: 43, 105–106, 119–120, 517). In some other countries, there were also individuals, who worked as social and cultural anthropologists. They tried to introduce the knowledge, research, and professional standards from western social and cultural anthropology into European socialist countries, and studied their own European socialist countries in a new, anthropological way.

Some of them managed to introduce social and cultural anthropology as a separate discipline into research institutions and universities (see Eretescu 2008; Geană 1990, 1997, 1999, 2002; Hedeşan 2008; Mihăilescu 2008; Mihăilescu, Iliev, and Naumović 2008c: 435; Sárkány 2002: 558). In Slovenia, the person who introduced western social and cultural anthropology was Prof. Stane Južnič (see Godina 2013; Minnich 2013: 349–50; Slavec Gradišnik 2000: 43, 105–106, 119–120, 517).

However, the native social and cultural anthropologists were exceptions, marginalized individuals, in European socialist countries. The main reason for that was ideological: they did not work in the strict framework of Marxism, they introduced non-Marxist theories and theoretical frameworks. Because of this, native social and cultural anthropology was understood as ‘a bourgeois discipline’, as a dangerous theoretical, methodological, research and study digression from Marxist social science (see Bošković 2008b; Bošković and Hann 2013; Godina 2002, 2013; Hann, Sárkány, and Skalník 2005; Kandert 2002; Mihăilescu, Iliev, and Naumović 2008c; Slavec Gradišnik 2000; Melikishvili 2002).

This was the reason why social and cultural anthropology and the individuals who worked in it, were negatively politically stigmatized. This was also the reason why socialist folklorists, ethnographers and ethnologists did not show any interest in identifying themselves with it; they strictly insisted on self-identification as folklorists, ethnographers or ethnologists.

To conclude: in European socialist countries, the absence of institutionalization was characteristic for native social and cultural anthropology as well as a lack of a recognized historical tradition. Native social and cultural anthropologists were recognized as unimportant individual excesses, which were ideologically problematic. As groups and individuals, they had almost no institutional back-up, little (if any) social capital and influential political connections.

2.4. Group No. 4: Social and Cultural Anthropologists Educated in the West

The fourth group, which participated in the postsocialist war for social and cultural anthropology in European socialist countries, was a group that consisted of social and cultural anthropologists educated in the West (see BR).

In most European socialist countries, there were few scientists who had studied social and cultural anthropology in western countries with an established and recognised social and/or cultural anthropological tradition. Some of these individuals had received a classical social and/or cultural anthropological education which, paradoxically, in principle prevented them from coming back to their home countries and incorporating themselves into research institutes and departments. The reason is the already mentioned fact that social and cultural anthropology had the status of 'a bourgeois science' in European socialist countries. This was the reason why those who studied social and cultural anthropology abroad were in principle understood as ideologically disoriented individuals who must be controlled and marginalized. Some of them were also in a situation which resulted in their migration from their native socialist state.

For all these reasons, not only the absence of separate and specialized research institutes and university departments but also a lack of elaborate social network and political connections (if those existed, there were individual, not group connections and networks) were characteristic for social and cultural anthropologists educated in the West. As a group they possessed very little social capital. For them also a lack of separate recognized historical tradition was characteristic. They were systematically marginalized.

3. About the Postsocialist War Over Social and Cultural Anthropology

From the contemporary perspective, it is evident that in European postsocialist countries it was the groups of ex-socialist ethnologists who won the war over social and cultural anthropology. They succeeded in defeating not only the native social and cultural anthropologists and the social and cultural anthropologists educated in the West but also the physical anthropologists, who lost their former position under socialism.

There are several reasons for this ethnological victory in the postsocialist war over social and cultural anthropology in European postsocialist countries. The already described characteristics of socialist ethnology played a crucial role. In the postsocialist war over social and cultural anthropology, these characteristics – the already existing institutionalization, ethnology as a recognized scientific discipline, socialist ethnologists as respected scientists – turned into a powerful weapon. It was much easier to rename the already existing Department

(Institute) of Ethnology as the Department (Institute) of Ethnology and (Cultural) Anthropology than to establish a new one.¹¹ In the negotiation for new departments, institutes, researches, jobs, positions etc. respected socialist ethnologists had a better position than marginalized native social and cultural anthropologists and social and cultural anthropologists educated in the West, and so on.

However, there were also several less visible factors which played a crucial role in the ethnological victory in the postsocialist war over social and cultural anthropology. We will describe only two of them.

3.1. The Role of Social Capital

Perhaps the most important, less visible factor was the social capital that ex-socialist ethnologists possessed from socialism. As Lampland (2007) showed in the case of the Hungarian postsocialist agrarian sector, it was exactly social capital which was the crucial factor in establishing positions in the new postsocialist social organisation. The basic principle is clear: those who had more important and influential group and individual connections received the best positions in new postsocialist society. The quality and quantity of knowledge was not important.

In my opinion, the same logic lies also behind the success of socialist ethnologists in the postsocialist war for social and cultural anthropology. From among all groups which participated in the war over social and cultural anthropology, the socialist ethnologists had the largest social capital, i.e., the most elaborated formal and informal individual and group connections and networks. Naumović (2008: 211) described these connections and networks as “dangerous liaisons.”

This social capital was a heritage from socialism. Socialist ethnologists established formal and informal individual and group connections during socialism, in which, as we have already mentioned, they had a privileged position in the study of ethnic groups. They established dense networks of inter-individual and inter-group connections, which enabled them in the socialist past and continued to enable them also in postsocialism to organize (mostly informal) social networks, processes of decision-making, research institutions, university departments, etc. in a form which guaranteed them the realisation of their interests.

¹¹ During the last three decades, the renaming of ethnological departments, institutes, journals etc. was a general practice in European postsocialist countries (see Benovska-Sabkova 2008; Bošković and Hann 2013; Elchinova 2002; Geană 2002; Hann, Sárkány, and Skalník 2005; Mihăilescu, Iliev, and Naumović 2008c; Mucha 2002; Muršič 2002; Sárkány 2002). The only reported exception from this practice was postsocialist Slovakia (see Bitušíková 2002: 142–44).

The important part of their social capital was already in socialism their established connections with the political elite and the Communist Party. Some socialist ethnologists did more to have them, some did less or nothing (see Slavec Gradišnik 2013). Despite the formal discontinuity with socialism these connections and networks remained crucial in all spheres of the new post-socialist societies (see Godina 2015). The same was true for groups of socialist ethnologists. At least some of them, those with already established connections with the ex-ruling Communist Party, could use their connections and networks also in postsocialist reality. In Slovenia, for example, we know by name those who among the socialist ethnologists were closely connected with the Slovene Communist Party during socialism.

3.2. The Role of (Political) Chameleonism

The second important invisible factor for the ethnological victory in the post-socialist war over social and cultural anthropology is connected to the ability/inability for ideological thinking, argumentation, conversion and manipulation.

Some socialist ethnologists developed several of those skills already in socialism, during the period when they were working in a politically loyal science. It included at least some of above-mentioned practices and skills.

On the other hand, physical anthropologists were mostly not skilled in these ideological activities, which in postsocialism became perhaps even more important than they were in socialism. If socialism was, when ideological definitions were in question, a relatively stable system and period, postsocialism has been much more turbulent. This turbulent climate rewarded only those individuals and groups, who have been able to make quick ideological accommodations and (sometimes shameless) switching from one ideological position to another.

Postsocialist history proved that among the four mentioned groups which fought in the war for social and cultural anthropology, in most European post-socialist countries the most skilled were the groups of socialist ethnologists. They adapted themselves successfully to the new social and political conditions. Without any problems some of them changed their political positions, renamed their disciplines, institutes and departments, rewrote the history of ethnology and social and cultural anthropology in their countries in the way to suit them and their interests. Their behaviour, activities and argumentations are instructive, even striking to study.¹²

¹² Such an instructive example would also include the activities and argumentations of some Slovene socialist ethnologists (see Brumen 2001, 2002; Jezernik 1991, 1993; Jezernik and Muršič 2000; Muršič 2002; Šmitek 1991, 1996; Šmitek and Jezernik 1992, 1995).

4. Some Consequences and Results

After groups of socialist ethnologists won the war over social and cultural anthropology in most of European postsocialist countries, important changes took place in postsocialist ethnology and social and cultural anthropology. We will discuss only few of them here, namely those that seem to have changed the landscape of social and cultural anthropology in European postsocialist countries irreversibly.

4.1. Redefining Ethnology and Social and Cultural Anthropology

During the postsocialist war over social and cultural anthropology, the fields of ethnology and social and cultural anthropology were redefined. These redefinitions did not produce a clear picture of what ethnology and social and cultural anthropology in postsocialist countries are or should be but resulted instead in a situation where there is no clear and universally accepted understanding of social and cultural anthropology.

In Slovenia and Croatia, for example, some ethnologists=cultural anthropologists deny the differences between ethnology and social and cultural anthropology, in opposition to the generally accepted opinion in the social sciences and humanities, and in opposition to the international standards of science (Brumen 2001, 2002; Buchowski 2004, 2005, 2012; Čapo-Žmegač 1993, 2014; Čapo and Gulin Zrnić 2014, 2017; Jezernik 1991, 1993; Jezernik and Muršič 2000, 2002; Prica 1995, 2006, 2007; Šmitek 1991, 1996; Šmitek and Jezernik 1992, 1995). Buchowski (2012: 22) writes about a “well-established anthropological tradition commonly named ethnology.” For Bulgaria, Elchinova (2002: 32) reports that “the distinction between the two disciplines is more about terminology than content.”

In other European postsocialist countries, the relation between ethnology and social and cultural anthropology is understood quite differently. Such is the case in Slovakia, where the ethnological approach is understood as different from the anthropological one (Bitušíková 2002: 144). Melikishvili (2002:72) reports from Georgia’s perspective that “every ethnologist, every cultural and social anthropologist is now working for the government.” A strong connection with politics was also reported for Croat ethno-anthropology (Rihtman Auguštin 2001: 192, 194); their field research was openly patriotic, which was recognized by some Western anthropologists as Croat nationalism (*ibid.*: 196; see Greverus 1996). Connections with politics, in Muršič’s opinion, has nothing to do with social and cultural anthropology (see Muršič 2002: 162). Melikishvili’s understanding of ethnology and social and cultural anthropology differs fundamentally from Kürti’s idea of social and cultural anthropology in European postsocialist countries (Kürti 1996, 2000, 2002a, 2002b, 2008). And so on.

To draw some kind of conclusion: in many European postsocialist countries we have reached a situation in which the fields of ethnology and of social and cultural anthropology are understood differently from country to country, even from one author to another within one country.

4.2. The Invention of Anthro-Ethnology

At least in some European postsocialist countries, especially in those where groups of socialist ethnologists identify themselves as social and cultural anthropologists occupied the most important positions in the field of social and cultural anthropology, a new quasi scientific discipline has become dominant, which their protagonists usually describe as ‘cultural anthropology’. However, this postsocialist ‘cultural anthropology’ remains in many important epistemological, theoretical and methodological aspects, essentially ethnology, to which some assorted anthropological elements have been added. Although called ‘cultural anthropology’, a more correct description for it is anthro-ethnology, i.e., a discipline which comprises an imaginary synthesis of ethnology and social and cultural anthropology. However, closer observation proves that this ‘discipline’ is neither ethnology nor social and cultural anthropology.

In describing what anthro-ethnology is not, we have not yet given any positive definition of what anthro-ethnology is. In my opinion, anthro-ethnology can be understood as a result of the anthropologisation of ethnology. From many European postsocialist countries we have reports about how new methods, research problems and methodology from social and cultural anthropology have been introduced into classic ethnological or ethnographical study (BR; Brumen 2001, 2002; Čapo-Žmegač 1993, 2002, 2014; Jezernik 1991, 1993; Jezernik and Muršič 2000; Kremenšek and Halpern 1995; Muršič 2002; Šmitek 1991, 1996; Šmitek and Jezernik 1992, 1995). This proves that an anthropologisation of ethnology is in process.

How long this process has lasted in any specific European postsocialist country and how many results it has so far produced, differs. In Slovenia, for example, contemporary anthro-ethnology is a result of the second phase of the anthropologisation of Slovene ethnology. The first phase of this process took place under socialism. Kremenšek (in Kremenšek and Halpern 1995: 53) described it as the “anthropologisation of our ethnology” and situated it “in the sixties and seventies.” However, as Kremenšek (ibid.: 55) stressed, “this did not make us anthropologists.” Kremenšek insisted on the difference between ethnology and social and cultural anthropology (see Kremenšek 1991, 1995; Kremenšek in Kremenšek and Halpern 1995).

And here lies the basic difference between the first and second phases of the anthropologisation of Slovene ethnology. Contemporary Slovene anthropo-ethnologists claim that the introduction of social and cultural anthropological knowledge into their ethnology has made them cultural (and also social) anthropologists (see Brumen 2001, 2002; Jezernik 1991, 1993; Jezernik and Muršič 2000; Muršič 2002; Šmitek 1991, 1996; Šmitek and Jezernik 1992, 1995). As Muršič (2002: 162) explained, “either we declare ourselves as anthropologists or ethnologists.”¹³ Such a dual or hybrid identity brings with it several advantages, especially in connection with the ‘money and power dilemma’.

However, the process of the anthropologisation of ethnology was not limited only to Slovene ethnology. Rihtman Auguštín described it for Croatian ethnology (Rihtman Auguštín 1998, 2001, 2004). In Croatia the result of this process was in her opinion a new scientific identity – “ethno-anthropology” (Rihtman Auguštín 2001: 276).¹⁴ Croatian ethno-anthropology differs in many characteristics from western social and cultural anthropology (see Čapo 2014: 61; Rihtman Auguštín 2001: 181-199). According to Rihtman Auguštín, Croatian ethno-anthropology is not a part of western social and cultural anthropology (*ibid.*).

Another example of the process of the anthropologisation of ethnology is the Serbian case (see Cvetković 2008: 302; Mihăilescu, Iliev, and Naumović 2008c: 445–6; Naumović 2008: 246, 251; Prelić 2008: 280).

4.3. De-professionalization

The last crucial result of the war over social and cultural anthropology in European postsocialist countries that we will discuss is the de-professionalization of social and cultural anthropology.

An important role in the de-professionalization of postsocialist social and cultural anthropology was played by the marginalisation of Western-educated social and cultural anthropologists, physical anthropologists, native social and cultural anthropology and of those ethnologists who did not support the transformation of ethnology into anthropo-ethnology.¹⁵ All these groups generally

¹³ It must be mentioned, however, that this equation in Slovenia is valid only for Slovene ethnologists; if, for example, a Slovene social and/or cultural anthropologist would insist on also being an ethnologist, this equation would no longer be valid.

¹⁴ I find Rihtman’s term ethno-anthropology misleading. Ethno-anthropology is namely not a special subfield or subdiscipline of social and cultural anthropology, but it “denotes anthropologised ethnological sciences.” (Čapo 2014: 61) This is the reason why the correct name for it is anthropo-ethnology.

¹⁵ In European postsocialist countries, many of ethnologists did not accept the transformation of ethnology into anthropo-ethnology (see BR). In Slovenia, this group of ethnologists represents the majority of professional ethnologists.

maintained higher professional standards than those being practiced in postsocialist anthropo-ethnology.

There are several reasons for that. One is the traditional non-acceptance of postmodernist anthropology among most of these mentioned groups.¹⁶ The second concerns the conviction that they could escape marginalisation by producing serious scientific work and results. The third was the comparison they regularly made with western universities and research institutions; those institutions modelled the professional standards they wanted to put into practice in their social and cultural anthropology and physical anthropology at home. The final reason we would like to mention is as follows: under socialism, they had still believed that in the (near) future they would be able to establish social and cultural anthropological departments at universities and research institutions. They thus sought to be prepared through serious anthropological work for such establishments.

Other circumstances which played an important role in the de-professionalization of social and cultural anthropology in at least some European postsocialist countries are as follows (see Elchinova 2002: 29–30; Kürti 2002a:76): the motivation to become anthropologists in order to prove democratic attitudes and values; the motivation to switch into anthropology to get a job; the motivation to become anthropologists to find a new label for a research activity not hosted by other already established disciplines etc. All these practices provided an entrance into social and cultural anthropology for individuals who perhaps had the motivation, even enthusiasm for becoming social and cultural anthropologists, but who lacked basic knowledge about the discipline they were joining.

Geană (2002: 105) described the basic logic of de-professionalization in European postsocialist countries in this way: “After the implementation of cultural anthropology, it is only the *denomination* of ‘anthropology’ that was spread in academia and society, not its whole *concept*, i.e., not also the specific research methods and the specific disciplinary language.”¹⁷

¹⁶ Some anthropo-ethnologists embraced postmodernism as the theoretical and methodological back-up of their analysis and research. Croatian anthropo-ethnologists “used the theoretical approach of postmodern ethnography.” (Rihtman Auguštin 2001: 192) In Sárkány’s opinion postmodernism in postsocialist ethnology and social and cultural anthropology has had very different effects than in the USA: “It hindered the choice of a firm paradigm.” (Sárkány 2002: 563)

¹⁷ By ‘concept’, Geană (2002: 111) means “a group of elements ‘holding together’; in our case, the concept of anthropology refers to the group of ontological, methodological and categorical elements together making up the disciplinary pattern of this science.”

5. Conclusion

In most East and Central European postsocialist countries, social and cultural anthropology during last 30 years experienced institutionalisation, but not the expected professionalization. As Geană (2002) correctly stresses, in European postsocialist countries these two processes did not in most cases unfold in parallel, as expected, but in many cases in opposition: the more institutionalisation, the less professionalization. The fact that institutionalisation of social and cultural anthropology has often been accompanied by de-professionalization, relates to the mentioned fact that what was institutionalized in most cases was deprofessionalized or at best semi-professionalized anthropo-ethnology.

Against all obstacles, it seems of crucial importance for the future of social and cultural anthropology in European postsocialist countries to introduce professional standards to the discipline, despite the fact that such practice is described by some western social and cultural anthropologists and by some postsocialist anthropo-ethnologists and social and cultural anthropologists as colonial (see Barrera-González, Heintz, and Horolets 2017; Buchowski 2004, 2005, 2012; Čapo-Žmegač 1993, 2002, 2014; Čapo and Gulin Zrnić 2014; Frykman 2012; Kiliánová 2012; Kürti 2008; Kürti and Skalník 2009; Poblöcki 2009; Prica 1995, 2006, 2007; Restrepo and Escobar 2005). Some postsocialist anthropo-ethnologists openly criticized those postsocialist social and cultural anthropologists who stand for professional standards in postsocialist social and cultural anthropology. For instance Čapo (2014: 65-66) in this respect criticises Kürti and Skalník.

This problem opens a question of how to make a productive distinction between professional standards in social and cultural anthropology and colonialism. Uncritical equalization of western social and cultural anthropology with not only colonialism but everything bad on the one hand and anthropo-ethnology as anti-colonial and good on the other hand has been established. However, this equalization ignores the fact that not everything that is part of western social and cultural anthropology is either bad or colonial, while not everything from anthropo-ethnology is good and/or anti-colonial. As we have already learned in other professional fields, it is not the western knowledge in mathematics, medicine etc. as such which can be declared colonial or anti-colonial, but how it is used. If the western knowledge is used in non-western societies for the empowerment of non-western societies, it is an anti-colonial fact. On the other hand, ignorance of western knowledge which reproduces western power over non-western societies is colonial practice.

The productive way out in postsocialist social and cultural anthropology is to use western social and cultural anthropological knowledge and to adopt the

professional standards of western social and cultural anthropology (this will make postsocialist social and cultural anthropology a professional activity) but use this knowledge and these standards for the empowerment of European postsocialist countries in the contemporary world capitalist system. All other solutions lead not only to de-professionalized social and cultural anthropology, but also to the reproduction of “neo-neocolonialism” (Godina 2015: 128) in European postsocialist countries.

Those of us who are dedicated to professional social and cultural anthropology should unify our activities (including internationally), to improve the position of professional social and cultural anthropology in European postsocialist countries and to guarantee that professional social and cultural anthropological knowledge is used for the empowerment of social and cultural anthropology and European postsocialist countries. We should start with activities to protect our discipline from the devastating results of the de-professionalisation and dilettantism that have been rampant also because this de-professionalisation and dilettantism is part of neo-neocolonialism, practiced in European postsocialist countries. For the realisation of this aim, international cooperation will be needed.

This international cooperation should change westernized social and cultural anthropology into de-westernized international social and cultural anthropology. How this social and cultural anthropology should be named – either cosmopolitan anthropology (Hann 2012) or world anthropology/world anthropologies (Pobłocki 2009; Restrepo and Escobar 2005) or trans-national anthropology (Čapo 2014) etc. – remains an open question. It is clear, however, that this social and cultural anthropology should be based on productive cooperation between western social and cultural anthropology and social and cultural anthropology in postsocialist countries. The crucial dimension of this cooperation will be a productive dialogue between social and cultural anthropologists from different geographic locations and theoretical and national traditions, which Kuper predicted already in 1994 to be a crucial dimension of future social and cultural anthropology (see Kuper 1994: 115).

For western social and cultural anthropologists such cooperation means, among others, not only to accept the de-westernization of professional social and cultural anthropology, but also to accept criticism on the part of non-western social and cultural anthropologists. And for European postsocialist social and cultural anthropologists, such cooperation presupposes not only to stop the de-professionalization of social and cultural anthropology in European postsocialist countries, but also to stop the affective, sometimes irrational attacks on western social and cultural anthropology.

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